

# **EXHIBIT AAAA**

## The New York Times

# *Operative Offered Trump Campaign ‘Kremlin Connection’ Using N.R.A. Ties*

By **Nicholas Fandos**

Dec. 3, 2017

WASHINGTON — A conservative operative trumpeting his close ties to the National Rifle Association and Russia told a Trump campaign adviser last year that he could arrange a back-channel meeting between Donald J. Trump and Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian president, according to an email sent to the Trump campaign.

A May 2016 email to the campaign adviser, Rick Dearborn, bore the subject line “Kremlin Connection.” In it, the N.R.A. member said he wanted the advice of Mr. Dearborn and Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, then a foreign policy adviser to Mr. Trump and Mr. Dearborn’s longtime boss, about how to proceed in connecting the two leaders.

Russia, he wrote, was “quietly but actively seeking a dialogue with the U.S.” and would attempt to use the N.R.A.’s annual convention in Louisville, Ky., to make “‘first contact.’” The email, which was among a trove of campaign-related documents turned over to investigators on Capitol Hill, was described in detail to The New York Times.

Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel investigating Russian interference in the election and possible collusion with the Trump campaign, secured a guilty plea on Friday from President Trump’s first national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, for lying to the F.B.I. about contacts with Moscow’s former ambassador to the United States. But those contacts came after Mr. Trump’s improbable election victory.

The emailed outreach from the conservative operative to Mr. Dearborn came far earlier, around the same time that Russians were trying to make other connections to the Trump campaign. Another contact came through an American advocate for Christian and veterans causes, and together, the outreach shows how, as Mr. Trump closed in on the nomination, Russians were using three foundational pillars of the Republican Party — guns, veterans and Christian conservatives — to try to make contact with his unorthodox campaign.



Rick Dearborn, left, a Trump campaign adviser, received an email asking for advice on how to arrange a meeting between Mr. Trump and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Both efforts, made within days of each other, centered on the N.R.A.'s annual meeting and appear to involve Alexander Torshin, a deputy governor of the Russian central bank and key figure in Mr. Putin's United Russia party, who was instructed to make contact with the campaign.

"Putin is deadly serious about building a good relationship with Mr. Trump," the N.R.A. member and conservative activist, Paul Erickson, wrote. "He wants to extend an invitation to Mr. Trump to visit him in the Kremlin before the election. Let's talk through what has transpired and Senator Sessions's advice on how to proceed."

It is not clear how Mr. Dearborn handled the outreach. He forwarded a similar proposal, made through Rick Clay, an advocate for conservative Christian causes, to Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and a top campaign aide. Mr. Kushner rebuffed the proposal at the time, according to two people who have seen Mr. Kushner's email.

Mr. Sessions told investigators from the House Intelligence Committee that he did not recall the outreach, according to three people with knowledge of the exchange. Mr. Dearborn did not return requests for comment, and Ty Cobb, the White House lawyer dealing with matters related to the investigations, declined to comment. Repeated attempts to reach Mr. Erickson were not successful.

Intelligence agencies have concluded that Russia, on orders from the highest levels of its government, undertook a sophisticated campaign to hack Democratic computers, spread propaganda and undermine the candidacy of Hillary Clinton. The repeated outreach around

the N.R.A. convention, where Mr. Trump accepted the group's endorsement, came just weeks after a self-described intermediary for the Russian government told George Papadopoulos, a campaign aide, that the Russians had "dirt" on Mrs. Clinton. And just weeks later, the president's eldest son arranged a meeting at Trump Tower with a Russian lawyer who promised damaging information about the would-be Democratic nominee.

"The Kremlin believes that the only possibility of a true reset in this relationship would be with a new Republican White House," Mr. Erickson wrote to Mr. Dearborn, adding, "Ever since Hillary compared Putin to Hitler, all senior Russian leaders consider her beyond redemption."

Alexander Torshin, a deputy governor of the Russian central bank and key figure in Mr. Putin's United Russia party, was instructed to make contact with the Trump campaign.  
Stanislav Krasilnikov/TASS, via Getty Images

Congressional investigators obtained the email as part of their inquiry into Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election and whether Mr. Trump's campaign aided the efforts. It appears to have caught the attention of senators as well. Senator Dianne Feinstein of California, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, penned letters to several Trump campaign foreign policy advisers last week asking for all documents related to the N.R.A., Mr. Erickson, Mr. Torshin, Mr. Clay, Mr. Dearborn and others.

Mr. Erickson, a longtime conservative operative who has been involved in several presidential campaigns, presented himself in the email as a well-connected intermediary to the upper reaches of the Russian government. By “happenstance” and the reach of the N.R.A., Mr. Erickson wrote, he had been put in position to “slowly begin cultivating a back-channel to President Putin’s Kremlin” in recent years.

“Russia is quietly but actively seeking a dialogue with the U.S. that isn’t forthcoming under the current administration,” he wrote.

Indeed, evidence does appear to show deep ties between Mr. Erickson, the N.R.A. and the Russian gun rights community that were formed in the years when many American conservatives, put off by the Obama administration’s policies, were increasingly looking to Mr. Putin as an example of a strong leader opposing immigration, terrorism and gay rights.

The N.R.A. was one of Mr. Trump’s biggest backers during the campaign, spending tens of millions of dollars to help elect him.

Mr. Erickson has known Maria Butina, a former assistant to Mr. Torshin and the founder of the Right to Bear Arms, a Russian gun-rights group, for several years. Ms. Butina, who helped Mr. Torshin make the request through Mr. Clay, hosted Mr. Erickson at a September 2014 meeting of the group at its Moscow office. And in February 2016, the two incorporated a company, Bridges LLC, together in South Dakota. What the company does is unclear.

In December 2015, Mr. Erickson returned to Russia as part of an N.R.A. delegation that included David Keene, the group’s onetime president, top donors and David A. Clarke Jr., the former sheriff of Milwaukee County who became a popular Trump campaign surrogate. At one stop, the group met with Dmitry Rogozin, the deputy prime minister in charge of defense. A photograph from the meeting shows Mr. Torshin was also present.

In the United States, the hospitality was returned. Mr. Torshin and Ms. Butina attended the N.R.A.’s annual convention in 2014 and 2015. Ms. Butina told the conservative news site Townhall that she attended the N.R.A. Women’s Leadership Luncheon as a guest of Sandra S. Froman, a former president of the group. And in 2015, she was given a tour of the N.R.A.’s Virginia headquarters.

Attempts to contact Ms. Butina were unsuccessful.

Mr. Erickson does not explicitly name Mr. Torshin in the email to Mr. Dearborn, but the message appears to refer to him, the people familiar with the communication said. Instead, he describes “President Putin’s emissary on this front,” whose plans match those of Mr. Torshin.

Mr. Torshin, he wrote, was planning to attend a reception being planned by Mr. Clay honoring wounded veterans that he expected Mr. Trump would also attend. Mr. Torshin expected to use the reception to “make ‘first contact’ ” with the candidate and present Mr. Trump’s wife, Melania, with a gift from the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to Mr. Clay, neither Mr. Trump nor his campaign officials attended the veterans' dinner. The president's son, Donald Trump Jr., and Mr. Torshin did attend a separate N.R.A. dinner that night.

Mr. Torshin served in the upper house of the Russian Parliament and was a member of the country's National Anti-Terrorism Committee, a government body that includes the ministers of defense, interior and foreign affairs and the director of the Federal Security Service, known as F.S.B., the K.G.B.'s successor. He has been a leading advocate of gun rights in Russia and of more closely linking the government and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Spanish investigators say that while he was in Parliament, Mr. Torshin laundered money for the Russian mafia through Spanish banks and properties. Mr. Torshin has denied those accusations.

Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman contributed reporting.

*Get politics and Washington news updates via Facebook, Twitter and the Morning Briefing newsletter.*

A version of this article appears in print on Dec. 4, 2017, on Page A13 of the New York edition with the headline: Operative Offered Trump Campaign Access to Putin

# **EXHIBIT BBBB**



Be the most well-informed person you know with the

# 5 THINGS NEWSLETTER

SENT DAILY BY OUR SENIOR EDITORIAL STAFF

Email address

SEND ME WHAT MATTERS

By subscribing you agree to our [privacy policy](#).



## Former Trump White House official Boris Epshteyn testifies in House Russia probe Thursday

By [Jeremy Herb](#) and Liz Stark, CNN

Updated 7:34 AM ET, Thu September 28, 2017



DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

Washington (CNN) — Former Trump campaign and White

By using this site, you agree to our updated [Privacy Policy](#) and our [Terms of Use](#).



Boris Epshteyn was a senior adviser to the Trump campaign

He left the role in March, and the White House didn't offer an explanation for his departure

Epshteyn is the latest person in the Trump orbit to appear before the panel as part of its investigation into Russia's election meddling and possible collusion between the Trump team and Russian officials.

The panel [interviewed longtime Trump confidante Roger Stone on Tuesday](#) in a closed session, and it has also spoken to Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and former Trump campaign aide Michael Caputo.

The committee has also interviewed in recent months several officials from the Obama administration and Hillary Clinton's campaign, including former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice, Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and Obama Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson.

Epshteyn was a senior adviser to the Trump campaign and took a White House job in the communications office. But he left the role in March, and the White House didn't offer an explanation for his departure. Epshteyn is currently chief political analyst for Sinclair Broadcast Group, the conservative-leaning network of television stations.

He appeared as a pro-Trump surrogate in numerous TV interviews throughout the campaign. On a few occasions in the past year, Epshteyn has appeared to dismiss the conclusions of the US intelligence community. Instead, he has echoed Trump's own discredited narratives, including when he argued that voter fraud caused Clinton to win the popular vote in 2016.

Epshteyn declined to comment when asked about Thursday's appearance before the panel.

A fluent Russian speaker, Epshteyn grew up in Moscow and emigrated to the United States in 1993. He joined Strategy International in 2007, a consulting firm with business dealings in Eastern Europe.

In October 2013, Epshteyn [moderated](#) a panel discussion with Russian government officials at a conference in New York City promoting investments in Moscow, according to The Huffington Post. Epshteyn was joined on stage by some officials from the Moscow city government, according to photographs from the event.

In one [CNN interview](#) from July 2016, Epshteyn claimed that Russia did not invade Crimea, saying, "Again, first of all, you -- Russia did not seize Crimea. We could talk about the conflict that happened between the Ukraine and the Crimea, the ongoing conflict where there was no seizure by Russia."

Russian-speaking troops invaded Crimea in 2014 and Russia soon annexed the Ukrainian territory.

In an [HBO interview](#) in May, Epshteyn repeatedly refused to say that Russia meddled in the 2016 election, putting him at odds with assessments from the CIA, FBI and NSA that Russia interfered.

"You'll have to ask Russia whether they did or not," Epshteyn said. "Whether there was any attempted meddling ... how would I know?"

*CNN's Jim Sciutto contributed to this report.*

# **EXHIBIT CCCC**

## The New York Times

---

# *Rick Gates Sought Online Manipulation Plans From Israeli Intelligence Firm for Trump Campaign*

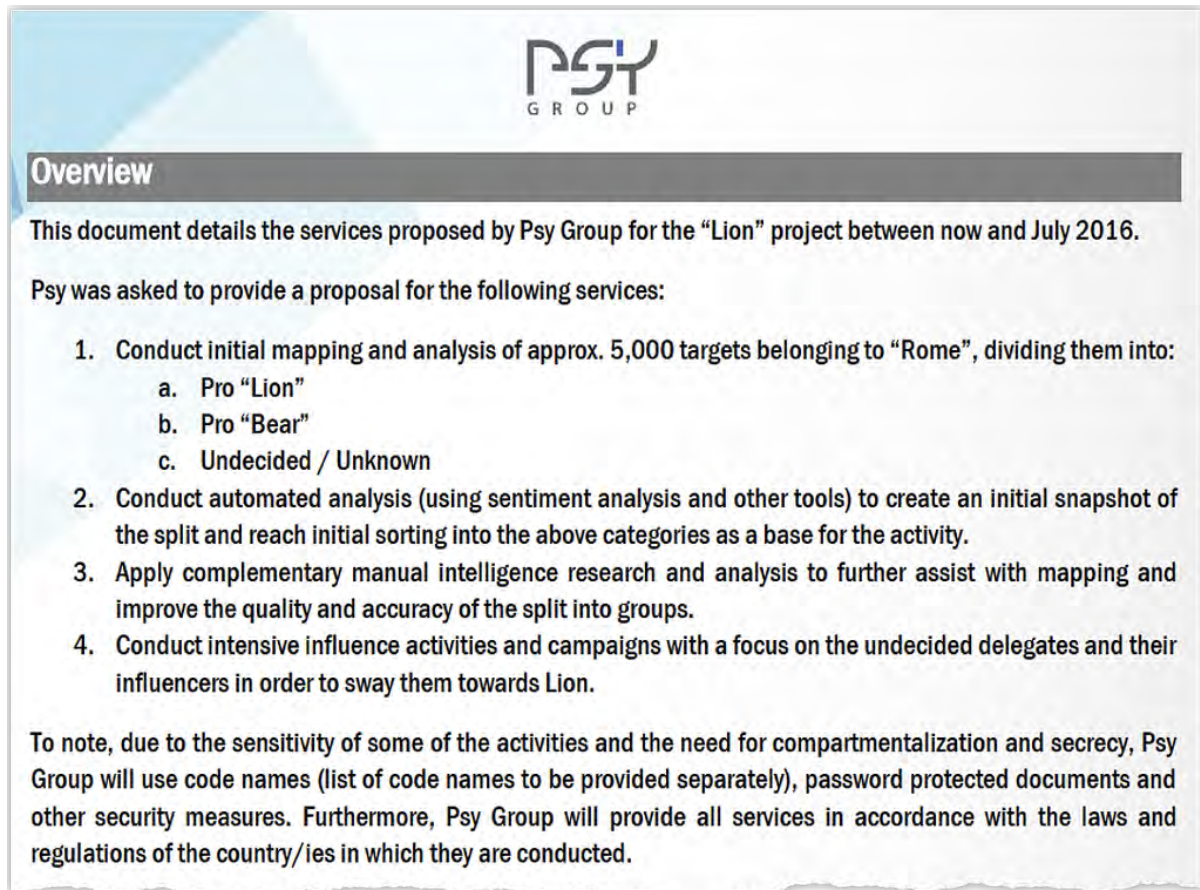
By Mark Mazzetti, Ronen Bergman, David D. Kirkpatrick and Maggie Haberman

Oct. 8, 2018

WASHINGTON — A top Trump campaign official requested proposals in 2016 from an Israeli company to create fake online identities, to use social media manipulation and to gather intelligence to help defeat Republican primary race opponents and Hillary Clinton, according to interviews and copies of the proposals.

The Trump campaign's interest in the work began as Russians were escalating their effort to aid Donald J. Trump. Though the Israeli company's pitches were narrower than Moscow's interference campaign and appear unconnected, the documents show that a senior Trump aide saw the promise of a disruption effort to swing voters in Mr. Trump's favor.

The campaign official, Rick Gates, sought one proposal to use bogus personas to target and sway 5,000 delegates to the 2016 Republican National Convention by attacking Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, Mr. Trump's main opponent at the time. Another proposal describes opposition research and "complementary intelligence activities" about Mrs. Clinton and people close to her, according to copies of the proposals obtained by The New York Times and interviews with four people involved in creating the documents.



Documents from Psy-Group laying out its proposals for the Trump campaign.

A third proposal by the company, Psy-Group, which is staffed by former Israeli intelligence operatives, sketched out a monthslong plan to help Mr. Trump by using social media to help expose or amplify division among rival campaigns and factions. The proposals, part of what Psy-Group called “Project Rome,” used code names to identify the players — Mr. Trump was “Lion” and Mrs. Clinton was “Forest.” Mr. Cruz, who Trump campaign officials feared might lead a revolt over the Republican presidential nomination, was “Bear.”

*[An Israeli company drew up digital manipulation proposals for a Trump campaign aide. Read them here.]*

There is no evidence that the Trump campaign acted on the proposals, and Mr. Gates ultimately was uninterested in Psy-Group’s work, a person with knowledge of the discussions said, in part because other campaign aides were developing a social media strategy. Psy-Group’s owner, Joel Zamel, did meet in August 2016 with Donald Trump Jr., Mr. Trump’s eldest son.

Investigators working for Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel investigating Russia’s campaign to disrupt the 2016 election and whether any Trump associates conspired, have obtained copies of the proposals and questioned Psy-Group employees, according to people familiar with those interviews.

The scope of the social media campaigns, essentially a broad effort to sow disinformation among Republican delegates and general election voters, was more extensive than the work typically done by campaign operatives to spread the candidate's message on digital platforms. The proposal to gather information about Mrs. Clinton and her aides has elements of traditional opposition research, but it also contains cryptic language that suggests using clandestine means to build "intelligence dossiers."

Mr. Gates first heard about Psy-Group's work during a March 2016 meeting at the Mandarin Oriental hotel along the Washington waterfront with George Birnbaum, a Republican consultant with close ties to current and former Israeli government officials. Mr. Gates had joined the Trump campaign days earlier with Paul Manafort, his longtime business partner, to try to prevent a revolt of Republican delegates from Mr. Trump toward Mr. Cruz, who was the favored candidate among the party's establishment.

According to Mr. Birnbaum, Mr. Gates expressed interest during that meeting in using social media influence and manipulation as a campaign tool, most immediately to try to sway Republican delegates toward Mr. Trump.

"He was interested in finding the technology to achieve what they were looking for," Mr. Birnbaum said in an interview. Through a lawyer, Mr. Gates declined to comment. A person familiar with Mr. Gates's account of the meeting said that Mr. Birnbaum first raised the topic of hiring an outside firm to conduct the social media campaign.

The special counsel's office indicted Mr. Manafort and Mr. Gates last year on multiple charges of financial fraud and tax evasion. Mr. Gates pleaded guilty to several of the charges this year, and he is cooperating with Mr. Mueller's investigation.

It is unclear whether the Project Rome proposals describe work that would violate laws regulating foreign participation in American elections. Psy-Group hired Covington & Burling, a Washington-based law firm, to conduct a legal review. Stuart Eizenstat, a former American diplomat and a partner at the firm who participated in the legal review, declined to comment on its conclusions.

Mr. Birnbaum was a protégé of Arthur J. Finkelstein, the legendary Republican political operative, and has spent years as a consultant working on behalf of candidates in foreign elections. In 1996, he helped Mr. Finkelstein engineer Benjamin Netanyahu's victory over Shimon Peres to become the prime minister of Israel.

Since then, Mr. Birnbaum has worked extensively as a campaign consultant for Israeli politicians and has developed a network of contacts with current and former Israeli security officials. He served as a foreign policy adviser to the 2016 presidential campaign of Ben Carson, the neurosurgeon who is now the secretary of housing and urban development.

Donald J. Trump and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas at a debate in 2016. Mr. Gates joined the Trump campaign to try to prevent a revolt of Republican delegates toward Mr. Cruz.  
Todd Heisler/The New York Times

Mr. Birnbaum appeared to initiate the contact with Mr. Gates, asking for his email address from Eckart Sager, a political consultant who had worked with both men, to pitch Mr. Gates on a technology that could be used by Mr. Gates's and Mr. Manafort's clients in Eastern Europe. Mr. Sager's name emerged this year in a filing by Mr. Mueller's team, which claimed that Mr. Manafort had tried to influence Mr. Sager's court testimony in the special counsel's case against Mr. Manafort.



After the hotel meeting with Mr. Gates in March 2016, Mr. Birnbaum worked directly with Psy-Group employees to refine the proposals for the Trump campaign, according to people familiar with the work.

The proposals all promise the utmost secrecy, including the use of code names and password-protected documents. Filled with jargon and buzzwords, they sketch out a vigorous campaign where Psy-Group employees would conduct the tedious work of creating messages that could influence delegates based on their personalities.

The first document, dated April 2016, said that the company “was asked to provide a proposal” for “campaign intelligence and influence services.” Psy-Group promised that “veteran intelligence officers” would use various methods to assess the leanings of the roughly 5,000 delegates to the Republican nominating convention.

After scouring social media accounts and all other available information to compile a dossier on the psychology of any persuadable delegate, more than 40 Psy-Group employees would use “authentic looking” fake online identities to bombard up to 2,500 targets with specially tailored messages meant to win them over to Mr. Trump.

The messages would describe Mr. Cruz’s “ulterior motives or hidden plans,” or they would appear to come from former Cruz supporters or from influential individuals with the same background or ideology as a target. The barrage of messages would continue for months and include “both online and offline” approaches, even telephone calls.

Psy-Group also said that it would obtain “unique intel” by different means, including “covert sources” and “tailored avatars.”

Each approach would “look authentic and not part of the paid campaign,” the proposal promised. The price tag for the work was more than \$3 million. To carry out the plan, Psy-Group intended to double its size, hiring an additional 50 employees — some of them American citizens — and renting new office space, according to former employees of the company.

A second proposal focused on gathering information about Mrs. Clinton and 10 of her associates through publicly available data as well as unspecified “complementary intelligence activities.” Psy-Group promised to prepare a comprehensive dossier on each of the targets, including “any actionable intelligence.”



A third document emphasized “tailored third-party messaging” aimed at minority, suburban female and undecided voters in battleground states. It promised to create and maintain fake online personas that would deliver messages highlighting Mr. Trump’s merits and Mrs. Clinton’s weaknesses or revealing “rifts and rivalries within the opposition.”

Though it appears that Trump campaign officials declined to accept any of the proposals, Mr. Zamel pitched the company’s services in at least general terms during a meeting on Aug. 3, 2016, at Trump Tower with Donald Trump Jr. That meeting, revealed in May by The Times, was also attended by George Nader, an emissary from the ruler of the United Arab Emirates, and by Erik Prince, a Republican donor and the founder of the private security company formerly known as Blackwater.

Former Psy-Group employees said that, in anticipation of the Trump Tower meeting, Mr. Zamel asked them to prepare an updated version of the third proposal. A lawyer for Mr. Zamel said that Mr. Zamel had not personally discussed specific proposals with Donald Trump Jr. or anyone else from the Trump campaign.

“Mr. Zamel never pitched, or otherwise discussed, any of Psy-Group’s proposals relating to the U.S. elections with anyone related to the Trump campaign, including not with Donald Trump Jr., except for outlining the capabilities of some of his companies in general terms,” said the lawyer, Marc Mukasey.

Mr. Nader and Mr. Zamel have given differing accounts over whether Mr. Zamel ultimately carried out the social media effort to help the Trump campaign and why Mr. Nader paid him \$2 million after the election, according to people who have discussed the matter with the two men.

The reason for the payment has been of keen interest to Mr. Mueller, according to people familiar with the matter.

It is unclear how and when the special counsel's office began its investigation into Psy-Group's work, but F.B.I. agents have spent hours interviewing the firm's employees. This year, federal investigators presented a court order to the Israel Police and the Israeli Ministry of Justice to confiscate computers in Psy-Group's former offices in Petah Tikva, east of Tel Aviv.

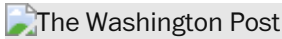
The company is now in liquidation.

Mark Mazzetti reported from Washington, Ronen Bergman from Tel Aviv, David D. Kirkpatrick from London and Maggie Haberman from New York.

A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 9, 2018, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Trump Aide Eyed Deception Plan To Tilt '16 Race

READ 266 COMMENTS

# **EXHIBIT DDDD**



## Politics

# Trump associate Roger Stone reveals new contact with Russian national during 2016 campaign

By [Manuel Roig-Franzia](#) and  
[Rosalind S. Helderman](#)

June 17

MIAMI — One day in late May 2016, Roger Stone — the political dark sorcerer and longtime confidant of Donald Trump — slipped into his Jaguar and headed out to meet a man with a “Make America Great Again” hat and a viscous Russian accent.

The man, who called himself Henry Greenberg, offered damaging information about Hillary Clinton, Trump’s presumptive Democratic opponent in the upcoming presidential election, according to Stone, who spoke about the previously unreported incident in interviews with The Washington Post. Greenberg, who did not reveal the information he claimed to possess, wanted Trump to pay \$2 million for the political dirt, Stone said.

“You don’t understand Donald Trump,” Stone recalled saying before rejecting the offer at a restaurant in the Russian-expat magnet of Sunny Isles, Fla. “He doesn’t pay for anything.”

Later, Stone got a text message from Michael Caputo, a Trump campaign communications official who’d arranged the meeting after Greenberg had approached Caputo’s Russian-immigrant business partner.

“How crazy is the Russian?” Caputo wrote, according to a text message reviewed by The Post. Noting that Greenberg wanted “big” money, Stone replied, “waste of time.”

Two years later, the brief sit-down in Florida has resurfaced as part of special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s sprawling investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign, according to Caputo. Caputo said he was asked about the meeting by prosecutors during a sometimes-heated questioning session last month.

Stone and Caputo, who did not previously disclose the meeting to congressional investigators, now say they believe they were the targets of a setup by U.S. law enforcement officials hostile to Trump.

They cite records — independently examined by The Post — showing that the man who approached Stone is actually a Russian national who has claimed to work as an FBI informant.

Interviews and additional documents show that Greenberg has at times used the name Henry Oknyansky. Under that name, he claimed in a 2015 court filing related to his immigration status that he had provided information to the FBI for 17 years. He attached records showing that the

government had granted him special permission to enter the United States because his presence represented a “significant public benefit.”

There is no evidence that Greenberg was working with the FBI in his interactions with Stone, and in his court filing, Greenberg said he had stopped his FBI cooperation sometime after 2013.

Greenberg, in text messages with The Post, denied that he had been acting on the FBI’s behalf when he met with Stone.

An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment, as did a spokesman for Mueller’s office.

The meeting took place two months earlier than federal officials have said a counterintelligence operation was officially opened and before WikiLeaks began releasing hacked Democratic emails.

It came in the same time period as other episodes in which Russian interests approached the Trump campaign. A few weeks earlier, Trump campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos [was told](#) in London that the Russians had dirt on Clinton. And it was two weeks before [the sit-down](#) at Trump Tower between Donald Trump Jr. and a Russian lawyer who he had been told could offer information that would hurt Clinton as part of a Russian government effort to help his father.

Trump and his allies have said that the meetings were inconsequential and that there was no collusion.

Stone and Caputo’s interactions with Greenberg mean that at least 11 Trump associates or campaign officials have acknowledged interactions with a Russian during the election season or presidential transition. Those interactions have become public in the year and a half since a Trump spokeswoman said no one associated with the campaign had communications with Russians or other foreign entities.

It is not clear how seriously investigators are taking the Florida meeting. Caputo said prosecutors during his interview seemed to have intense interest in the interaction, as well as the role of Greenberg.

Reached by phone, Greenberg, 59, initially denied Stone’s account of a meeting.

“This is wrong information,” Greenberg said.

Later, in text messages to a Post reporter, Greenberg changed his story, acknowledging that he’d met with Stone and providing a skeletal account of the encounter that matched Stone’s in some ways. Unprompted, Greenberg used essentially the same language as Stone to describe Stone’s reaction: “Trump will never pay for anything.”

Stone said Greenberg was alone at the meeting. But Greenberg said he was accompanied by a Ukrainian friend he identified only as Alexei, who he said had been fired from a job with the Clinton Foundation, a global charitable organization founded by Hillary Clinton’s husband, former president

Bill Clinton. Greenberg provided no evidence the man had worked for the Clinton Foundation, and a foundation spokesman said the group has never employed a man with the first name of Alexei.

“He was very upset, and he wants to tell his story,” Greenberg said in a text. “He told Mr. Stone what he knew and what he want.”

Greenberg denied that he asked for money, saying that it was his friend who spoke with Stone.

President Trump and his allies previously accused the FBI of unfairly targeting his campaign following revelations that another FBI informant, Cambridge University professor Stefan A. Halper, approached Papadopoulos and two other campaign advisers starting in July 2016 to gather information about their possible ties to Russia.

“If you believe that [Greenberg] took time off from his long career as an FBI informant to reach out to us in his spare time, I have a bridge in Brooklyn that I want to sell you,” Caputo said in an interview.

In a separate interview, Stone said, “I didn’t realize it was an FBI sting operation at the time, but it sure looks like one now.”

The Florida meeting adds another layer of complexity to Stone’s involvement in the Russia probe. For months, as several of Stone’s employees and associates have been subpoenaed or have appeared before the Mueller grand jury, it has been clear that the special counsel has been scrutinizing repeated claims by Stone that he communicated with WikiLeaks via a back-channel source before the group’s 2016 release of hacked Democratic Party emails.

Stone has said it’s possible he will be indicted, speculating that Mueller might charge him with a crime unrelated to the election to silence him. He said he anticipates that his meeting with Greenberg could be used in an attempt to pressure him to testify against Trump — something he says he would never do.

Last year, in [a videotaped interview](#) with The Post, Stone denied having any contacts with Russians during the campaign.

“I’ve never been to Russia. I didn’t talk to anybody who was identifiably Russian during the two-year run-up to this campaign,” he said. “I very definitely can’t think of anybody who might have been a Russian without my knowledge. It’s a canard.”

Stone and Caputo said in separate interviews that they did not disclose the Greenberg meeting during testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence because they had forgotten about an incident that Stone calls unimportant “due diligence” that would have been “political malpractice” not to explore.

Caputo said that he was asked during a session with the committee in July whether he’d ever been offered information about the Clinton campaign by a Russian, and he either answered “no” or that he

could not recall.

However, Stone and Caputo said their memories were refreshed by text messages that Caputo said he no longer has in his possession but was shown during a May 2 interview.

Caputo's attorney on Friday sent a letter amending his House testimony, and he plans to present Caputo's account of the Greenberg incident to the Office of Inspector General for the Justice Department, which has announced it is examining the FBI's use of informants during the Russia probe. Stone said his attorney has done the same.

Documents and interviews reveal a quirk-filled story that spans three decades and two continents. It touches down in locales as distinct as a hipster Miami art gallery and a riverfront construction site. But, like so much of the drama swirling around the 2016 election, its roots lie far away from American ballot boxes — in the Russian capital of Moscow.

Though they never met, both Caputo and Greenberg lived heady existences in Moscow in the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a period when the city had a frisson of artistic and creative energy that Caputo compares to "Paris of the 1920s, but with Kalashnikovs." Caputo had moved to Russia to develop a Rock-the-Vote-style campaign for Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Greenberg was already a familiar figure in the city's social whirl. He married a Russian actress and moved to Los Angeles. Court records show that, after being charged in 1994 with assault with a deadly weapon, he entered a plea in which he was convicted without accepting guilt.

According to a declaration he filed in court, Greenberg spent almost two years in the custody of the U.S. immigration service. He said he decided in 2000 to return to Russia, where, according to interviews and local media coverage, he resumed a glamorous life.

For a time, he shared an apartment at a fashionable Moscow address with John Daly, a producer of hit films including "The Terminator," and he was well known by expats from the Moscow club scene.

"He was an up and down kind of guy. Charming. Very ingratiating and personal," said Edward Bass, a movie producer who knew Greenberg in Moscow in that time.

According to accounts in Russian media, he was arrested in 2002 and charged with a decade-old \$2.7 million fraud. The Moscow Times [reported](#) that authorities found three passports with false names in his apartment and photographs that appeared to show him posing with movie directors Steven Spielberg and Oliver Stone.

The Post was unable to determine the outcome of the case from public records. Greenberg denied wrongdoing, saying that he was not convicted and that the case was closed.

Greenberg returned to the United States, according to immigration records that he submitted as part of his federal court filing in 2015.



He attached to the statement government documents outlining his immigration history.

Between 2008 and 2012, the records show, he repeatedly was extended permission to enter the United States under a “significant public benefit parole.” The documents list an FBI agent as a contact person. The agent declined to comment.

Immigration lawyer David Leopold, former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, said the documents described an immigration history generally consistent with Greenberg’s claims that he had been allowed to enter the United States to assist law enforcement.

In a 2015 court declaration, Greenberg — using the last name Oknyansky — said he’d been giving information to the FBI since returning to Russia from the United States in 2000.

“Wherever I was, from Iran to North Korea, I always send information to” the FBI, he wrote. “I cooperated with the FBI for 17 years, often put my life in danger. Based on my information, there is so many arrests criminal from drugs and human trafficking, money laundering and insurance frauds.”

Greenberg did not respond to questions about his use of multiple names but said in a text that he had worked for the “federal government” for 17 years.

“I risked my life and put myself in danger to do so, as you can imagine,” he said.

By May 2016, Greenberg was in the midst of an eventually unsuccessful zoning fight to open a restaurant on the Miami River, according to public records. He showed up without an invitation at a gallery opening organized by Caputo’s public relations firm, according to Caputo’s business partner, Sergey “George” Petrushin.

Greenberg approached Petrushin and invited him to check out the possible restaurant site the next day, Petrushin said. According to Petrushin, Greenberg eventually said that he knew Petrushin was partners with Caputo and that he had information he wanted to share that would be helpful to Trump’s campaign.

Petrushin called Caputo and handed the phone to Greenberg to make his pitch.

At the time, Caputo said, Russia was not a major campaign issue, and the man’s accent raised no red flags for him.

“I said, ‘Let me get somebody to vet it for you,’” Caputo recalls saying.

Caputo knew just the guy: Roger Stone.

Stone had spent decades trying to persuade Trump to run for president. In the spring of 2016, Stone was no longer with the campaign — but he remained in touch with Trump and some in his orbit.

When Stone arrived at the restaurant in Sunny Isles, he said, Greenberg was wearing a “Make America Great Again” T-shirt and hat. On his phone, Greenberg pulled up a photo of himself with Trump at a rally, Stone said.

“We really want to help Trump,” Stone recalled Greenberg saying during the brief encounter.

By Greenberg’s account, he had limited contact with Stone, sitting at a nearby table while his friend Alexei conducted the meeting. “Alexei talk to Mr. Stone, not me,” he wrote. He added that he believes Alexei has moved back to Ukraine and that they are not in contact.

When Caputo followed up with Stone via text to ask if “anything at all interesting” took place, Stone responded with a single word: “No.”

Helderman reported from Washington. Alice Crites and Devlin Barrett in Washington and Natasha Abbakumova in Moscow contributed to this report.

#### Manuel Roig-Franzia



Manuel Roig-Franzia is a feature writer in The Washington Post’s Style section, where he profiles national figures in the worlds of politics, the law and the arts. He previously served as bureau chief in Miami for The Post’s National staff and in Mexico City for the Post’s Foreign staff. He is the author of a biography of Sen. Marco Rubio. [Follow](#)

#### Rosalind S. Helderman



Rosalind Helderman is a political enterprise and investigations reporter for The Washington Post. She joined The Post in 2001. [Follow](#)



The Washington Post

**Thank you.**

Your subscription supports journalism that matters.

# **EXHIBIT EEEE**

## The New York Times

# *Fund-Raiser Held Out Access to Trump as a Prize for Prospective Clients*

By **Kenneth P. Vogel** and **David D. Kirkpatrick**

March 25, 2018

WASHINGTON — For Elliott Broidy, Donald J. Trump’s presidential campaign represented an unparalleled political and business opportunity.

An investor and defense contractor, Mr. Broidy became a top fund-raiser for Mr. Trump’s campaign when most elite Republican donors were keeping their distance, and Mr. Trump in turn overlooked the lingering whiff of scandal from Mr. Broidy’s 2009 guilty plea in a pension fund bribery case.

After Mr. Trump’s election, Mr. Broidy quickly capitalized, marketing his Trump connections to politicians and governments around the world, including some with unsavory records, according to interviews and documents obtained by The New York Times. Mr. Broidy suggested to clients and prospective customers of his Virginia-based defense contracting company, Circinus, that he could broker meetings with Mr. Trump, his administration and congressional allies.

Mr. Broidy’s ability to leverage his political connections to boost his business illuminates how Mr. Trump’s unorthodox approach to governing has spawned a new breed of access peddling in the swamp he vowed to drain.

Mr. Broidy offered tickets to V.I.P. inauguration events, including a candlelight dinner attended by Mr. Trump, to a Congolese strongman accused of funding a lavish lifestyle with public resources. He helped arrange a meeting with Republican senators and offered a trip to Mar-a-Lago, the president’s private Florida resort, for an Angolan politician. And he arranged an invitation to a party at Mr. Trump’s Washington hotel for a Romanian parliamentarian facing corruption charges, who posted a photograph with the president on Facebook.

This type of access has value on the international stage, where the perception of support from an American president — or even a photo with one — can benefit foreign leaders back home.

Mr. Broidy was open about his business interests, but the administration made no effort to curtail his offers of access to clients or prospective clients.

Yet Mr. Broidy was so aggressive, some associates said, that they warned him to tone down his approach for fear that he might run afoul of the president, clients or American lobbying and anti-corruption laws.

As with so many other political conventions, Mr. Trump has upended the traditional system of access to the president, among the most prized chits in Washington. That is partly because of lax vetting that has allowed largely unfettered access to Mr. Trump and his White House by loyalists, friends and hangers-on with their own policy agendas or business interests.

But it is also because few of Washington's established lobbyists have close connections to the president. In their place, a new class of insider has emerged, able to lobby the president directly on behalf of clients or business partners, an uncommon opportunity in prior administrations, when lobbyists focused on winning support from lawmakers or regulators.

In a statement, Mr. Broidy said the success of his company reflected his recruitment of "the best people, including a number of former flag officers," not his political connections. "The idea that our success derives from activities around last year's presidential inauguration is not only misplaced but insulting to the careers and capabilities of our highly trained and decorated veterans," he said.

Mr. Broidy, 60, in some ways personifies this new breed of Trump insider. A lifelong Los Angeles resident who worked as an accountant before making a fortune as an investor, Mr. Broidy grew more interested in politics after the Sept. 11 attacks, which shaped his hawkish approach to foreign policy and concern for the defense of Israel. In 2005, he was appointed to a federal homeland security advisory panel.

Mr. Broidy pleaded guilty in 2009 to giving nearly \$1 million in illegal gifts to New York state officials to help his company land a \$250 million contract with the state's public pension fund. He paid \$18 million in restitution and avoided jail time.

As he worked to rebuild his bank account and reputation, he expanded his business interests in the defense and security industry, starting a company called Threat Deterrence in 2013 and purchasing Circinus in July 2015.



President Denis Sassou-Nguesso of the Republic of Congo was invited by Mr. Broidy to Mr. Trump's inauguration festivities, but he declined. Kenny Katombe/Reuters

Mr. Broidy initially supported Senator Ted Cruz of Texas for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016, embracing Mr. Trump only after Mr. Cruz dropped out.

His business took off after Mr. Trump's election. Circinus has won lucrative work from around the world, including contracts worth more than \$200 million to do defense work for the United Arab Emirates. And Mr. Broidy openly promoted Circinus's work in meetings with Mr. Trump and other Republican officials, according to documents and interviews.

But Mr. Broidy faces a sudden backlash.

One of his business partners, George Nader, is cooperating with the special counsel, whose investigators have asked about Mr. Nader's contacts with top Trump administration officials as well as his possible role in funneling money from the U.A.E. to Mr. Trump's political efforts, according to people familiar with the inquiry.

Mr. Nader helped Circinus gain access to U.A.E.'s crown prince, while also using Mr. Broidy as a conduit to shape Trump administration policy toward the Persian Gulf on behalf of the U.A.E. and Saudi Arabia, both American allies. Mr. Broidy, in turn, appears to have helped Mr. Nader get his photograph taken with Mr. Trump at a fund-raiser, over the unspecified objections of the Secret Service. Mr. Nader has been convicted on charges related to child pornography and sexual abuse of minors.



Hundreds of pages of Mr. Broidy's emails, proposals and contracts were provided to The Times by an anonymous group critical of Mr. Broidy's advocacy of American foreign policies in the Middle East. Mr. Broidy's representatives say they have proof that the documents were stolen by hackers working for Qatar in retaliation for his efforts to rally opposition in Washington to Qatar, a regional nemesis of the Saudis and the Emiratis. The Qataris dismiss this charge.

The documents reveal that Mr. Broidy, a vice chairman of the finance committee for Mr. Trump's inauguration, arranged invitations to parties celebrating the event for foreign leaders with whom Circinus worked to sign contracts that could have been worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Mr. Broidy in some cases presented the invitations in a manner that suggested they were linked to their countries' willingness to do business with Circinus.

For instance, Mr. Broidy invited Denis Sassou-Nguesso, the longtime president of the Republic of Congo, to a handful of inauguration week events, including the candlelight dinner featuring Mr. Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and their wives. "Your name has been submitted and approved," Mr. Broidy wrote to Mr. Sassou-Nguesso in a note on Broidy Capital Management letterhead. Mr. Broidy stressed that the invitation was from Mr. Broidy and "is not coming from the Joint Congressional Committee" on Inaugural Ceremonies, which oversees the swearing-in and a luncheon at the Capitol.

The day after the letter was dated, Mr. Broidy asked his team at Circinus to prepare an invoice for \$2 million to Mr. Sassou-Nguesso's office for "military capabilities assessment and review/services," according to emails and documents.

People close to Mr. Broidy said no invoice was sent and Circinus never worked for the Congolese government. Mr. Sassou-Nguesso declined the invitation to the inauguration festivities, they said.

Donors to previous inaugurations were also able to invite foreign heads of state to events as their guests, a spokesman for Mr. Broidy noted.

Two officials from Romania, another prospective Circinus client, met Mr. Trump at a private party to which Mr. Broidy invited them during inauguration week at the Trump International Hotel near the White House. Liviu Dragnea, a parliamentary leader who runs the Social Democratic Party, called for closer ties between Romania and the United States, prompting Mr. Trump to declare, "We will make it happen! Romania is important for us!" according to Mr. Dragnea's Facebook post, reported by McClatchy.

At the time, Mr. Dragnea faced corruption charges, which he continues to fight. But for months after the inauguration, Circinus continued pitching his government partly on the access it could provide to Mr. Trump, according to a person who works with the Romanian government and was briefed on the solicitation.

Circinus has yet to receive contracts from Romania, people close to Mr. Broidy said. The company entered into an agreement last month with a Romanian government-owned defense company that appears to give it the inside track for contracts valued at more than \$200 million, according to Romanian news media and people familiar with the contracting process.



Similarly, in a letter dated Jan. 3, 2017, and emailed to top Angolan government officials, Mr. Broidy indicated that he was also sending both an invitation to the inauguration festivities and a proposal for Circinus to provide security services for Angola. In one version of the proposal, the company sought nearly \$64 million over five years. “With numerous preparations ahead, we request that you kindly return the executed document no later than January 9, 2017,” Mr. Broidy wrote in the letter to João Lourenço, then the Angolan defense minister, and another Angolan official.

Three days before inauguration, the Angolans submitted a \$6 million payment to Circinus, which people close to Mr. Broidy say was \$2 million less than the Angolans had agreed to pay. That same day, the Angolans and Mr. Broidy met on Capitol Hill with senators including Tom Cotton of Arkansas and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, both Republicans, encounters arranged by Mr. Broidy and his team.

President João Lourenço of Angola was invited by Mr. Broidy last year to Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Trump’s Florida resort, even as Mr. Broidy pressed Angola for payments on a contract. Mr. Lourenço never responded to the letters.

Ampe Rogerio/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

About one month later, Mr. Broidy again wrote to Mr. Lourenço, discussing plans for him “to be joining us at Mira Largo” — an apparent reference to Mar-a-Lago, where Mr. Broidy is a member and has been spotted introducing guests to the president — “this coming weekend.”

“Many preparations have been made in advance of your visit, including additional meetings at the Capitol and the Department of Treasury,” Mr. Broidy wrote.

He went on to remind Mr. Lourenço that Angola was past due on “the balance of the payment” for Circinus’s services. “Please make this payment immediately,” he wrote.

Not long after Mr. Lourenço was inaugurated as president of Angola in September, Mr. Broidy wrote again to congratulate him and offer to help set up meetings with Mr. Trump and Mr. Pence. “Before the formalities which would naturally be in order between our governments, I am able to assess and advise in this matter, and would be delighted to help foster such closer relation between Luanda and Washington,” Mr. Broidy wrote, referring to the Angolan capital.

Mr. Lourenço did not come to Mar-a-Lago and never responded to the letters, according to people close to Mr. Broidy. Circinus never collected any additional funds from Angola beyond the initial \$6 million payment, they said.

Mr. Broidy emphasizes to potential clients how his connections to Mr. Trump could benefit them, according to several people who have worked with him or heard his pitches.

“He was mentioning that he has political connections, and it could be helpful,” said Eymen Errais, a counselor to the Tunisian Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation.

Mr. Errais and the department’s minister, Fadhel Abdelkefi, met with Mr. Broidy and Circinus executives in Tunisia a few weeks after Mr. Trump’s election. Circinus sought a contract to build an open-source intelligence center for the Tunisian government, a person familiar with the meeting said, but Mr. Abdelkefi’s ministry instead sought to persuade Mr. Broidy to invest in the Tunisian hospitality industry.

Nonetheless, in an email to Mr. Abdelkefi just after the meeting, Mr. Broidy vowed that the center “would be an extremely useful and effective tool for your government” and again emphasized his connection to Mr. Trump. He characterized the incoming administration as “an unprecedented opportunity, in that the House, Senate and executive branch of our government are all under Republican control for the first time in 10 years.”

Circinus prepared a proposal for a five-year contract totaling \$80 million for the Tunisian work. But Mr. Errais said the Tunisians decided not to do business with Circinus. “A connection with Trump — how would that help us for security?” he said.

A person close to Mr. Broidy said he discussed the Republicans’ control of Congress and the White House to suggest that the American government might increase spending on counterterrorism.

Mr. Broidy’s allies say he has never hidden the overlap between his business interests and his political activity. In a memorandum about an October Oval Office meeting, for example, Mr. Broidy wrote that he had volunteered to Mr. Trump that his company was seeking a contract from the United Arab Emirates and had tried to arrange a private meeting for the president to discuss the matter with their leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed.

But as scrutiny has mounted around Mr. Broidy, Republican officials signaled that he would be a distraction at a high-dollar fund-raiser with Mr. Trump this month in Los Angeles. Mr. Broidy helped plan it and was listed as a co-host.

After conversations with Ronna McDaniel, the chairwoman of the Republican National Committee, he volunteered not to attend, according to people briefed on the situation.

The dinner and round-table with the president proceeded without him.

Kenneth P. Vogel reported from Washington, and David D. Kirkpatrick from London.

A version of this article appears in print on March 26, 2018, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Marketing Ties to Trump, Top Donor Made Millions

READ 355 COMMENTS

**EXHIBIT FFFF**

## The New York Times

---

# *Trump Jr. and Other Aides Met With Gulf Emissary Offering Help to Win Election*

By **Mark Mazzetti, Ronen Bergman and David D. Kirkpatrick**

May 19, 2018

WASHINGTON — Three months before the 2016 election, a small group gathered at Trump Tower to meet with Donald Trump Jr., the president’s eldest son. One was an Israeli specialist in social media manipulation. Another was an emissary for two wealthy Arab princes. The third was a Republican donor with a controversial past in the Middle East as a private security contractor.

The meeting was convened primarily to offer help to the Trump team, and it forged relationships between the men and Trump insiders that would develop over the coming months — past the election and well into President Trump’s first year in office, according to several people with knowledge of their encounters.

Erik Prince, the private security contractor and the former head of Blackwater, arranged the meeting, which took place on Aug. 3, 2016. The emissary, George Nader, told Donald Trump Jr. that the princes who led Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were eager to help his father win election as president. The social media specialist, Joel Zamel, extolled his company’s ability to give an edge to a political campaign; by that time, the firm had already drawn up a multimillion-dollar proposal for a social media manipulation effort to help elect Mr. Trump.

The company, which employed several Israeli former intelligence officers, specialized in collecting information and shaping opinion through social media.



Donald Trump Jr. was said to respond approvingly to a proposal for a social media manipulation effort to help elect his father as president. Damon Winter/The New York Times

It is unclear whether such a proposal was executed, and the details of who commissioned it remain in dispute. But Donald Trump Jr. responded approvingly, according to a person with knowledge of the meeting, and after those initial offers of help, Mr. Nader was quickly embraced as a close ally by Trump campaign advisers — meeting frequently with Jared Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law, and Michael T. Flynn, who became the president's first national security adviser. At the time, Mr. Nader was also promoting a secret plan to use private contractors to destabilize Iran, the regional nemesis of Saudi Arabia and the Emirates.

After Mr. Trump was elected, Mr. Nader paid Mr. Zamel a large sum of money, described by one associate as up to \$2 million. There are conflicting accounts of the reason for the payment, but among other things, a company linked to Mr. Zamel provided Mr. Nader with an elaborate presentation about the significance of social media campaigning to Mr. Trump's victory.

The meetings, which have not been reported previously, are the first indication that countries other than Russia may have offered assistance to the Trump campaign in the months before the presidential election. The interactions are a focus of the investigation by Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, who was originally tasked with examining possible Trump campaign coordination with Russia in the election.

Mr. Nader is cooperating with the inquiry, and investigators have questioned numerous witnesses in Washington, New York, Atlanta, Tel Aviv and elsewhere about what foreign help may have been pledged or accepted, and about whether any such assistance was coordinated with Russia, according to witnesses and others with knowledge of the interviews.



Erik D. Prince, the founder of Blackwater, arranged the meeting with Donald Trump Jr., George Nader and Joel Zamel. Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg News

The interviews, some in recent weeks, are further evidence that special counsel's investigation remains in an intense phase even as Mr. Trump's lawyers are publicly calling for Mr. Mueller to bring it to a close.

It is illegal for foreign governments or individuals to be involved in American elections, and it is unclear what — if any — direct assistance Saudi Arabia and the Emirates may have provided. But two people familiar with the meetings said that Trump campaign officials did not appear bothered by the idea of cooperation with foreigners.

A lawyer for Donald Trump Jr., Alan Futerfas, said in a statement that “prior to the 2016 election, Donald Trump Jr. recalls a meeting with Erik Prince, George Nader and another individual who may be Joel Zamel. They pitched Mr. Trump Jr. on a social media platform or marketing strategy. He was not interested and that was the end of it.”

The August 2016 meeting has echoes of another Trump Tower meeting two months earlier, also under scrutiny by the special counsel, when Donald Trump Jr. and other top campaign aides met with a Russian lawyer after being promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton. No evidence has emerged suggesting that the August meeting was set up with a similar premise.



Stephen Miller, a senior aide to President Trump, was in Donald Trump Jr.'s office when the others arrived for the meeting. Shawn Thew/EPA, via Shutterstock

The revelations about the meetings come in the midst of new scrutiny about ties between Mr. Trump's advisers and at least three wealthy Persian Gulf states. Besides his interest in Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, Mr. Mueller has also been asking witnesses about meetings between White House advisers and representatives of Qatar, Saudi Arabia's bitter rival.

A lawyer for Mr. Zamel denied that his client had carried out any campaign on Mr. Trump's behalf. "Neither Joel Zamel, nor any of his related entities, had any involvement whatsoever in the U.S. election campaign," said the lawyer, Marc L. Mukasey.

"The D.O.J. clarified from Day 1 that Joel and his companies have never been a target of the investigation. My client provided full cooperation to the government to assist with their investigation," he said.

Kathryn Ruemmler, a lawyer for Mr. Nader, said, "Mr. Nader has fully cooperated with the special counsel's investigation and will continue to do so." A senior official in Saudi Arabia said it had never employed Mr. Nader in any capacity or authorized him to speak for the crown prince.

Mr. Trump has allied himself with the Emirati crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan, endorsing his strong support for Saudi Arabia and confrontational approaches toward Iran and Qatar. Al Drago for The New York Times

Mr. Prince, through a spokesman, declined to comment. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

## Advisers to the Court

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, the de facto ruler of the United Arab Emirates, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, the king's main adviser, had long opposed many of the Obama administration's policies toward the Middle East. They resented President Barack Obama's agreement with Iran over its nuclear program, his statements of support for the Arab Spring uprisings and his hands-off approach to the Syrian civil war.

News outlets linked to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates fiercely criticized Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Trump's Democratic opponent, when she was secretary of state, and diplomats familiar with their thinking say both princes hoped for a president who would take a stronger hand in the region against both Iran and groups like the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mr. Nader had worked for years as a close adviser to Crown Prince Mohammed of Abu Dhabi, and Mr. Zamel had worked for the Emirati royal court as a consultant as well. When Mr. Trump locked up the Republican presidential nomination in early 2016, Mr. Nader began making inquiries on behalf of the Emirati prince about possible ways to directly support Mr. Trump, according to three people with whom Mr. Nader discussed his efforts.

One of Mr. Zamel's firms did work for Oleg V. Deripaska, an aluminum magnate, who has been linked to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Sergei Karpukhin/Reuters

Mr. Nader also visited Moscow at least twice during the presidential campaign as a confidential emissary from Crown Prince Mohammed of Abu Dhabi, according to people familiar with his travels. After the election, he worked with the crown prince to arrange a meeting in the Seychelles between Mr. Prince and a financier close to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

Companies connected to Mr. Zamel also have ties to Russia. One of his firms had previously worked for oligarchs linked to Mr. Putin, including Oleg V. Deripaska and Dmitry Rybolovlev, who hired the firm for online campaigns against their business rivals.

Mr. Deripaska, an aluminum magnate, was once in business with the former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, who has pleaded not guilty in the special counsel investigation to charges of financial crimes and failing to disclose the lobbying work he did on behalf of a former president of Ukraine, an ally of Mr. Putin. Mr. Rybolovlev once purchased a Florida mansion from Mr. Trump.

Mr. Nader's visits to Russia and the work Mr. Zamel's companies did for the Russians have both been a subject of interest to the special counsel's investigators, according to people familiar with witness interviews.

Mr. Prince has known Mr. Nader since he worked for Blackwater in Iraq.  
Zach Gibson for The New York Times

## A String of Meetings

Mr. Zamel and Mr. Nader were together at a Midtown Manhattan hotel at about 4 p.m. on the afternoon of Aug. 3 when Mr. Nader received a call from Mr. Prince summoning them to Trump Tower. When they arrived, Stephen Miller, a top campaign aide who is now a White House adviser, was in Donald Trump Jr.'s office as well, according to the people familiar with the meeting.

Mr. Prince is a longtime Republican donor and the brother of Betsy DeVos, the education secretary, and Mr. Prince and Mr. Nader had known each other since Mr. Nader had worked for Blackwater as a business agent in Iraq in the years after the American invasion. Mr. Prince has longstanding ties to the Emirates, and has frequently done business with Crown Prince Mohammed.

Mr. Prince opened the meeting by telling Donald Trump Jr. that “we are working hard for your father,” in reference to his family and other donors, according to a person familiar with the meeting. He then introduced Mr. Nader as an old friend with deep ties to Arab leaders.

Mr. Nader repeatedly referred to the Saudi and Emirati princes as “my friends,” according to one person with knowledge of the conversation. To underscore the point, he would open his mobile phone to show off pictures of him posing with them, some of which The New York Times obtained.

George Nader in 1999. He is an adviser to the Emiratis who is cooperating in the special counsel investigation. Ron Sachs/Picture-Alliance, via Associated Press

Mr. Nader explained to Donald Trump Jr. that the two princes saw the elder Mr. Trump as a strong leader who would fill the power vacuum that they believed Mr. Obama had left in the Middle East, and Mr. Nader went on to say that he and his friends would be glad to support Mr. Trump as much as they could, according to the person with knowledge of the conversation.

Mr. Zamel, for his part, laid out the capabilities of his online media company, although it is unclear whether he referred to the proposals his company had already prepared. One person familiar with the meeting said that Mr. Nader invited Donald Trump Jr. to meet with a Saudi prince — an invitation the younger Mr. Trump declined. After about half an hour, everyone exchanged business cards.

“There was a brief meeting, nothing concrete was offered or pitched to anyone and nothing came of it,” said Mr. Mukasey, the lawyer for Mr. Zamel.

By then, a company connected to Mr. Zamel had been working on a proposal for a covert multimillion-dollar online manipulation campaign to help elect Mr. Trump, according to three people involved and a fourth briefed on the effort. The plan involved using thousands of fake social media accounts to promote Mr. Trump’s candidacy on platforms like Facebook.

Mr. Nader and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia in a photograph obtained by The New York Times. .

There were concerns inside the company, Psy-Group, about the plan's legality, according to one person familiar with the effort. The company, whose motto is "shape reality," consulted an American law firm, and was told that it would be illegal if any non-Americans were involved in the effort.

Mr. Zamel, the founder of Psy-Group and one of its owners, has been questioned about the August 2016 meeting by investigators for the special counsel, and at least two F.B.I. agents working on the inquiry have traveled to Israel to interview employees of the company who

worked on the proposal. According to one person, the special counsel's team has worked with the Israeli police to seize the computers of one of Mr. Zamel's companies, which is currently in liquidation.

In the hectic final weeks of the campaign and during the presidential transition, several of Mr. Trump's advisers drew Mr. Nader close. He met often with Mr. Kushner, Mr. Flynn and Stephen K. Bannon, who took over as campaign chairman after Mr. Manafort resigned amid revelations about his work in Ukraine.

In December 2016, Mr. Nader turned again to an internet company linked to Mr. Zamel — WhiteKnight, based in the Philippines — to purchase a presentation demonstrating the impact of social media campaigns on Mr. Trump's electoral victory. Asked about the purchase, a representative of WhiteKnight said: "WhiteKnight delivers premium research and high-end business development services for prestigious clients around the world. WhiteKnight does not talk about any of its clients."

After the inauguration, both Mr. Zamel and Mr. Nader visited the White House, meeting with Mr. Kushner and Mr. Bannon.

At that time, Mr. Nader was promoting a plan to use private contractors to carry out economic sabotage against Iran that, he hoped, might coerce it to permanently abandon its nuclear program. The plan included efforts to deter Western companies from investing in Iran, and operations to sow mistrust among Iranian officials. He advocated the project, which he estimated would cost about \$300 million, to American, Emirati and Saudi officials.

Last spring, Mr. Nader traveled to Riyadh for meetings with senior Saudi military and intelligence officials to pitch his Iran sabotage plan. He was convinced, according to several people familiar with his plan, that economic warfare was the key to the overthrow of the government in Tehran. One person briefed on Mr. Nader's activities said he tried to persuade Mr. Kushner to endorse the plan to Crown Prince Mohammed in person on a trip to Riyadh, although it was unclear whether the message was delivered.

Asked about Mr. Nader's plans to attack Iran, the senior Saudi official said Mr. Nader had a habit of pitching proposals that went nowhere.

Mr. Nader was also in discussions with Mr. Prince, the former head of Blackwater, about a plan to get the Saudis to pay \$2 billion to set up a private army to combat Iranian proxy forces in Yemen.

Since entering the White House, Mr. Trump has allied himself closely with Saudi Arabia and the Emirates. His first overseas trip was to Riyadh. He strongly backed Saudi and Emirati efforts to isolate their neighbor Qatar, another American ally, even over apparent disagreement from the State and Defense Departments.

This month, Mr. Trump also withdrew from an Obama administration nuclear deal with Iran that both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had campaigned against for years, delivering them their biggest victory yet from his administration.



Mark Mazzetti reported from Washington, Ronen Bergman from Tel Aviv and David D. Kirkpatrick from London. Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

A version of this article appears in print on May 20, 2018, on Page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Trump Inquiry Grows to Include Contacts in Gulf

# **EXHIBIT GGGG**

# The New York Times

## THE SATURDAY PROFILE

### *A Trump Tower Neighbor Is the Point Man for Europe's Populists*

By **Jason Horowitz**

April 14, 2017

PALM BEACH, Fla. — George Guido Lombardi spotted President Trump's young son Barron alone on a couch playing a video game in the gaping and gilded living room of Mar-a-Lago, his father's private oceanfront club in Palm Beach.

"What are you playing?" Mr. Lombardi asked as a Secret Service agent watched under dripping chandeliers and medieval Flemish tapestries. Barron, engrossed in his phone, answered politely. But as Mr. Lombardi pressed on about spring break plans, the 11-year-old made it clear that he was not terribly interested in talking to his father's longtime Trump Tower neighbor.

The same cannot be said, however, of the populist, anti-establishment leaders in Europe, who seem to have identified the Italian as a potential access point to the Trump administration.

With a deep suspicion of Islam, open borders and the European Union, Mr. Lombardi, 66, considers himself a bridge to Mr. Trump for his old friends and ideological allies in Europe, including Marine Le Pen of France, Geert Wilders of the Netherlands, Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary and Beppe Grillo, the co-founder of Italy's insurgent Five Star Movement — "the Trump of Italy," as Mr. Lombardi calls him.

"I'm American to the extent I'm here 40 years," he said in Italian-accented English. "But at the same time I understand Europe a lot and I understand what's going on."

What's going on, he says, is that Mr. Trump has given hope to politicians trying to harness populist forces, often with the social media tools that Mr. Lombardi himself has used in his capacity as the administrator of Bikers for Trump and about 500 other pro-Trump Facebook groups.

But Mr. Lombardi's apparent prominence shows that something else is going on. The election of Mr. Trump, a master self-promoter, has imbued members of his social circle with the perception of juice that comes with proximity to power.

Mr. Lombardi, a chief executive of plausible-sounding foundations (North Atlantic League) and practiced photo bomber of officials and second-string celebrities (Frank Stallone, Kenny G), is not letting the opportunity go to waste. He is now busy explaining the evils of Chancellor

Angela Merkel of Germany to international reporters, speaking on a panel in the Italian Parliament (“Trump has said on more than one occasion that he’d like to meet Putin”) and causing a global stir by escorting Ms. Le Pen to a Trump Tower cafe.

“It was kind of innocent,” Mr. Lombardi said of Ms. Le Pen’s January visit, as he sat next to a whirring Boca Freeze soft ice cream machine in the Mar-a-Lago beach house as Secret Service agents lounged outside, looking out over the Atlantic.

Ms. Le Pen, in America at his invitation, he said, had suggested a coffee in the lobby of Mr. Trump’s building, where he conceded, “there was always a remote possibility” of seeing the then president-elect. “I said, ‘Listen, Marine, you know there is all the media there,’” Mr. Lombardi recalled, saying Ms. Le Pen insisted no one would recognize her. “And sure enough: Bang.” (A spokesman for Ms. Le Pen did not return a call for comment.)

Born in Geneva, Mr. Lombardi has also introduced himself as Count de Canevaro and wears a gold ring bearing his family’s coat of arms. In the library at Mar-a-Lago he walked from a painting of Mr. Trump in tennis whites to a 1750 oil painting of Benedetto Saluzzo Della Manta, who he claimed came from the same region as a distant ancestor.

He moved as a child to Rome, where he said the riots of 1968 and the rampant communism of his university classmates prompted his departure to America. He arrived in his 20s, bummed around, married, had children, started a jewelry business, broke into real estate, divorced and met Gianna Lahainer at a National Italian American Foundation event.

Ms. Lahainer, a former office worker from Trieste who had married the real estate mogul Frank Lahainer, was already a friend and neighbor of Mr. Trump, having bought one of the first condos in Trump Tower. When Mr. Trump first considered buying Mar-a-Lago in 1985, she warned him about the noise pollution from plane traffic over the estate, prompting him to renegotiate the price.

Mr. Lahainer died in 1995 and in 2000, his widow, then 65, married Mr. Lombardi. The couple delighted in telling how she put her late husband on ice at a funeral home because she did not want to miss the social season. “Why should I wait?” she once told the Palm Beach chronicler Ronald Kessler.

Mr. Lombardi said that in reality his wife could not immediately procure permits to send her husband’s body back to his Italian birthplace, but the story amounted to “good advertising.”

While his second wife introduced him to Mr. Trump’s Mar-a-Lago circle, Mr. Lombardi acted as an unofficial (“always unofficial”) representative in the United States of Italy’s anti-immigrant Northern League, often called The Lega in Italy. He said he first met Ms. Le Pen in the early 1990s in Brussels through a friend in the European Parliament.

“I told her right away, ‘Marine, dump your dad. He is just a dead weight. And anyway you have to make a choice. You are either with the Jews or you are with the Muslims. You can’t be with both.’”

The two stayed in touch, and Mr. Lombardi took credit for arranging a meeting between her and the Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, Ron Prosor, in 2011. (The Israeli ambassador later claimed the meeting was an accident.)

Mr. Lombardi expresses fondness for the Jewish people, “our curly friends,” he said referring to the orthodox party that had rented Mar-a-Lago out that afternoon. The specter of the Nazis fuels his preferred, and somewhat tortured, historical parallel.

He envisions the Russian leader, Vladimir V. Putin, as the champion of the spiritual descendants of World War II resistance fighters. “Le Pen, Geert, Lega, Grillo, all the resistance is fighting the Nazi Islamists,” he said. “Of course, Ms. Merkel — You are Jewish, aren’t you? Come on! She’s the one who brought in all these Muslims more than anybody else. Why? Because they never lost their bad habits.”

Despite his increased visibility on Italian television, Mr. Lombardi cuts a low profile in Italy. But he said Mr. Trump has leaned on his Italian expertise, inquiring once about Silvio Berlusconi, the former prime minister, because, Mr. Lombardi said, Mr. Trump was intrigued by a “billionaire who became a politician.” Mr. Lombardi said on a panel in the Italian Parliament last year that Mr. Trump invited Mr. Berlusconi to America last Christmas, but received no reply.

When it came to Italy, though, Mr. Trump’s interest centered on showing the innocence of Amanda Knox, an American college student accused of murder in Perugia. Mr. Trump often spoke out and posted on Twitter in support of Ms. Knox, and asked Mr. Lombardi to look into her case during a trip to Italy. Now, Mr. Lombardi said, the president is “very upset” with the ingratitude of Ms. Knox, who supported Hillary Clinton.

Mr. Lombardi wanted to be of service to Mr. Trump again when he ran for president. The day after Mr. Trump declared his candidacy, Mr. Lombardi asked his neighbor if he really intended to run and then offered to organize support for him on social media.

Mr. Trump assented and Mr. Lombardi, who had no professional social media experience, began setting up a network of Facebook groups to organize support for Mr. Trump and antagonism toward Mrs. Clinton. He said he received many appeals to be an administrator of Facebook groups.

Congressional investigators are examining whether Mr. Trump’s supporters coordinated with Russians to promote stories that helped Mr. Trump. Mr. Lombardi said he had no relationship with Russia and dismissed any suggestion that his groups passed around stories pushed by Moscow-affiliated news media outlets or web robots. “I’m not a troll,” he said.

Instead, Mr. Lombardi expressed pride in his social media work. As Barron, shadowed by the Secret Service agent, kicked a soccer ball with a couple of children on a nearby lawn, Mr. Lombardi scrolled through hundreds of Facebook groups on his phone, including an icon that read, in Italian, “Friends of Putin’s Russia.” (“They ask me if I wanted to be an administrator,” he explained.) Then Mr. Lombardi dragged the screen to an icon he particularly liked.

“People Front for the Liberation of Europe. This one I created it. That’s my group. Sounds like me, no?” he said, listing the European anti-establishment leaders the group promoted. “All my friends.”

A version of this article appears in print on April 15, 2017, on Page A5 of the New York edition with the headline: Trump’s Neighbor and a Point Man for Europe’s Populists

# **EXHIBIT HHHH**



# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/michael-cohens-d-c-consulting-career-scattershot-with-mixed-success-1526257805>

## Michael Cohen's D.C. Consulting Career: Scattershot, With Mixed Success

Pitching himself as the president's lawyer to companies expecting a Clinton win, Mr. Cohen won AT&T and Novartis but was spurned by Ford and Uber

*By Rebecca Ballhaus, Peter Nicholas, Michael Rothfeld and Joe Palazzolo*

Updated May 13, 2018 8:38 p.m. ET

When Michael Cohen came knocking after the 2016 election, touting himself as the president's lawyer, a man who could decipher the new administration, Ford Motor Co. said no. So did Uber Technologies Inc.

He managed to notch AT&T Inc. and Novartis AG. And Squire Patton Boggs, a law and lobbying firm, hired him for a sizable fee—though he felt it wasn't enough.

Mr. Cohen talked to associates about building a huge practice. He mused about approaching foreign governments and foreign firms. But a broad review of his Washington dealings since they first surfaced last week shows his efforts were scattershot and met only with mixed success—both for Mr. Cohen and his clients.

---

### RELATED READING

---

- 'Boss, I Miss You So Much': The Awkward Exile of Michael Cohen (April 26)

His work did have an impact in one way. It dragged some of the world's largest corporations and other firms into Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation: Novartis,

Ford and AT&T have responded to information requests from Mr. Mueller's office, according to people familiar with the matter.

More fortunate are the dozens of Fortune 100 companies who, when contacted by The Wall Street Journal, said they hadn't received any overtures from Mr. Cohen or had any contact with him.

Mr. Cohen's pitch was blunt. He would tell prospective clients—large corporations worried about their lack of connections to President Donald Trump's administration—that he didn't know who was advising them, but that the companies "should fire them all," a person familiar with Mr. Cohen's approach said. "I have the best relationship with the president on the outside, and you need to hire me," Mr. Cohen told them, according to this person.



Michael Cohen, arriving on Capitol Hill in 2017, sought to use his relationship with the president to launch a Washington consulting business. PHOTO: PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mr. Cohen repeatedly pitched Uber, which said no, citing Mr. Cohen's ownership of New York taxi medallions as a potential conflict of interest with the ride-hailing firm, a person close to the company said. He modified his pitch in response to those objections, reminding the company he was "the president's lawyer," this person said.

The company, this person said, was "bemused."



Mr. Cohen approached Uber seeking to sign it up as a client, only to be rebuffed. The ride-sharing company was "bemused" by the pitch. PHOTO: ERIC RISBERG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Severe losses on his New York City taxi investments had, in fact, fueled Mr. Cohen's desire to make money from his ties to the president. A friend described his financial situation as "precarious" and said Mr. Cohen was having trouble maintaining his family's upscale Manhattan lifestyle.

"I want you to know I'm looking out for deals," Mr. Cohen told his friend Mark Cuban in April 2017 as he pitched the owner of the Dallas Mavericks on hiring a health-industry firm Mr. Cohen

took on as a client, according to Mr. Cuban. “Michael is a hustler,” Mr. Cuban said. “That’s who he is, that’s what he does.”

Mr. Cohen didn’t register as a lobbyist, which wasn’t required provided he only gave companies advice and didn’t seek to influence policy. His clients largely remained quiet about having added him to their payrolls. Lobbyists connected to the companies that hired Mr. Cohen said they were unaware their clients had done so.

His successful consulting deals were made through Essential Consultants LLC, the same company he had used months earlier to arrange a secret payment of \$130,000 to former adult film star Stephanie Clifford—professionally known as Stormy Daniels—in exchange for her silence about an alleged sexual encounter with Mr. Trump. He denies the affair.

When contacted by the Journal for this article, Mr. Cohen said in a written statement: “These falsehoods and gross inaccuracies are only being written in the hopes of maligning me for sensationalistic purposes. The truth will prevail and will ultimately be proven in court and not by pundits.” He didn’t respond when asked what he was disputing.

It is common for people close to a new administration to offer their services based on their proximity to power, though it is far more unusual for the president’s personal attorney to do so. “The more you can be seen as an intimate of the president, the more important you become to prospective clients,” said Tom Daschle, the former Senate Democratic leader and head of a company that provides strategic counsel to large companies and other clients.

Last month, federal prosecutors raided Mr. Cohen’s properties as part of an investigation into possible bank fraud and campaign-finance violations in his efforts to raise cash and conceal negative information about Mr. Trump during the 2016 campaign, according to people familiar with the matter. Mr. Cohen has denied wrongdoing.

The investigation, being led by the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, stemmed in part from Mr. Mueller, who is probing Russian meddling in the 2016 election and whether the Trump campaign colluded with Moscow.

The president has denied any collusion and Moscow denies meddling. A spokesman for Mr. Mueller’s office declined to comment.

From the campaign days, Mr. Cohen made an effort to establish his reputation as a confidant of Mr. Trump, whom he referred to as “the boss” regardless of whether he was speaking to the president or to others, according to people familiar with the matter.

In the first weeks after the election, Mr. Cohen maintained an office in Trump Tower in New York, close to the transition offices. On Jan. 18, 2017, two days before the inauguration, he announced in a Fox News interview that he was leaving the Trump Organization, where he had worked since 2007, to serve as Mr. Trump’s personal lawyer.

By that time, however, he knew he wouldn't achieve his biggest goal: a prominent role in the new White House. Mr. Cohen soon began saying he was "going to build up a huge practice" finding investments for clients, said one associate. "He'd use words like, 'Big guys are going to hire me.'"



Ziad Ojakli, Ford's head of government affairs, right, was interviewed by the office of Special Counsel Robert Mueller over Mr. Cohen's approach to the auto maker. PHOTO: PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mr. Cohen tried to strengthen his relationships with others in Mr. Trump's orbit, including Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son who was serving on the transition team, and Elliott Broidy, a top Trump fundraiser who was serving on the inaugural committee, according to people familiar with the matter.

In January, Mr. Cohen signed two of the wealthy donors to the president's inaugural committee as his clients: AT&T and the investment management firm Columbus Nova. AT&T had donated \$2 million to the inauguration; Columbus Nova CEO Andrew Intrater had donated \$250,000. Mr. Cohen solicited Mr. Intrater's donation, according to a person involved in the inauguration.

Columbus Nova's biggest investor is a company called Renova Group that was founded by Russian oligarch Viktor Vekselberg, Mr. Intrater's cousin and one of the richest men in Russia, who has close ties to the Kremlin. At Mr. Intrater's invitation, Mr. Vekselberg attended inauguration festivities, where Mr. Cohen networked with the crowd and spent time with Mr. Intrater, according to people who witnessed his interactions.

He pitched potential clients on what he said was his ability to help them understand the incoming administration, according to people familiar with the strategy. AT&T agreed to pay him \$50,000 a month. Columbus Nova paid him \$500,000 last year.

"It was never that he could talk to Trump" about a client's particular policy interests, one person familiar with Mr. Cohen's pitch said. "It was more that he could decipher what the orbit was thinking because of his long-term relationships and understanding of how the president operates."





Robert Quinn, senior vice president at AT&T, left, seen here with Chief Executive Randall Stephenson, was ousted last week after news broke that the firm had hired Mr. Cohen. PHOTO: DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

In February 2017, Mr. Cohen began discussing with Mr. Broidy, a venture capitalist who had helped raise money for Mr. Trump during the campaign, the possibility of going into the foreign-consulting business together, and told associates about those plans, according to people familiar with his discussions. A spokesman for Mr. Broidy denied there were any plans to work together.

That partnership didn't pan out, but Mr. Cohen kept trying, the people said. He proposed pitching foreign governments, including from the Middle East and Asia.

One of his early clients, Swiss drugmaker Novartis, paid Mr. Cohen \$100,000 a month for a year, even after a March 2017 meeting in which it determined the attorney's services wouldn't be useful. Monthly retainers for such services in Washington typically run from \$15,000 to \$30,000, lobbyists say.

Less than a month after the inauguration, Felix Sater, who had worked with Mr. Cohen on a failed plan for a Trump-branded tower in Moscow, introduced Mr. Cohen to Robert Armao, a consultant and businessman with connections in Washington and in foreign governments, Mr. Armao recalled.

Mr. Armao had previously discussed with Mr. Sater a deal involving refurbishing Ukrainian nuclear power plants. Mr. Sater also hoped to ship excess energy to former Soviet bloc countries. Mr. Sater had considered bringing in Mr. Cohen because of his connections to the president.

Over coffee at the '21' Club in New York, Mr. Armao said, Mr. Sater described Mr. Cohen as a brilliant real-estate attorney who might help him with property investments. No nuclear or real-estate deals resulted.

In April 2017, Mr. Cohen signed a consulting contract with 4C Health Solutions, a Virginia-based startup. David Adams, the chief executive of 4C, previously told the Journal he met Mr. Cohen

through another consultant. Mr. Adams said last month that the company, which agreed to pay Mr. Cohen 5% of business he generated, hadn't paid Mr. Cohen in connection with the contract because he hadn't brought in any business.

Mr. Cohen's deal with law and lobbying firm Squire Patton Boggs was for \$500,000 a year, and gave him a cut of any fees the law firm collected from clients he referred. Among the five clients he delivered to the firm was U.S. Immigration Fund LLC, a company with ties to Mr. Kushner. The Florida company connects businesses with foreign investors through a U.S. visa program.

A friend of Mr. Cohen said that Squire Patton Boggs worked "hand in hand" with Mr. Cohen, and the firm's leaders "paraded him around like a model" for many of their clients.

Mr. Cohen had an office in the firm's Rockefeller Center space in New York. He exchanged pleasantries with other lawyers in the hallway, but his office door was closed about 90% of the time, said one person close to the firm. At Mr. Cohen's request, Squire Patton Boggs installed a lock on his door for which only he had the key, the person said.

About his relationship with the president, he told lawyers at the firm he could call "the boss at any time," the person said.

People close to the White House say there was little contact between the two and, unlike other longstanding advisers to the president who wandered in and out of the White House in the early weeks, Mr. Cohen was more often found at the bar and restaurant of the new Trump International Hotel in Washington.

Over time, Mr. Cohen became frustrated with the relationship, telling one associate he believed he deserved more money because Squire Patton Boggs was capitalizing on his ties to the president to sell clients on the firm.

"Every one of these motherf—ers is going around the world and using my relationship in order to acquire clients, but I'm not being fairly compensated," the associate recalled Mr. Cohen saying.

The firm declined to comment on Mr. Cohen remarks.

He told associates he wanted to seek partnerships with other consulting and lobbying firms, including Baker Botts and FTI Consulting, both international firms, according to people familiar with the matter. Both firms said they weren't aware of talks with Mr. Cohen and never entered partnerships with him.

As 2017 passed, Mr. Cohen grew frustrated with his lack of access to the administration. In calls with associates of the president, Mr. Cohen often asked: "Have you heard from the boss?" One person who saw Mr. Cohen at a restaurant over the winter said Mr. Cohen voiced unhappiness about the state of his relationship with Mr. Trump, complaining that the president was "not calling him and not helping him," this person said.

In November, he landed another client, Korea Aerospace Industries Ltd. , which said it hired him to provide “legal consulting concerning accounting standards on production costs.” Mr. Cohen also proposed to associates pitching foreign governments and companies with a big U.S. presence, including Samsung Electronics Co. Samsung says it wasn’t approached.

Toward the end of the year, Mr. Cohen’s Washington efforts started to unravel. AT&T and Novartis have since called hiring him a mistake.

In March, Mr. Cohen confided in friends he felt undervalued by Mr. Trump and questioned whether he should continue his work as lawyer for the president, said a person familiar with the matter. About a week later, Mr. Cohen’s ambivalence seemed to have vanished. He called associates seeking contributions for a legal-defense fund for White House aides who had been subpoenaed by investigators, the person said. A person familiar with the fund said Mr. Cohen was never asked to raise money for it, and didn’t do so.

Less than a month later, the FBI raided his home, a hotel room where he and his family were staying temporarily and his office at Squire Patton Boggs. The law firm, which had notified Mr. Cohen earlier in March that it was terminating his contract, announced the split that day.

—*Michael C Bender, Drew FitzGerald and Julie Bykowicz contributed to this article.*

**Write to** Rebecca Ballhaus at [Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com](mailto:Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com), Peter Nicholas at [peter.nicholas@wsj.com](mailto:peter.nicholas@wsj.com), Michael Rothfeld at [michael.rothfeld@wsj.com](mailto:michael.rothfeld@wsj.com) and Joe Palazzolo at [joe.palazzolo@wsj.com](mailto:joe.palazzolo@wsj.com)

*Appeared in the May 14, 2018, print edition as ‘Michael Cohen’s Consulting Career Met Mixed Success.’*

Copyright © 2017 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.



# **EXHIBIT III**

[Imprisoned In Myanmar](#)[Energy & Environment](#)[Brexit](#)[North Korea](#)[Charged: The Future of Autos](#)

## POLITICS

DECEMBER 26, 2017 / 7:17 PM / 10 MONTHS AGO

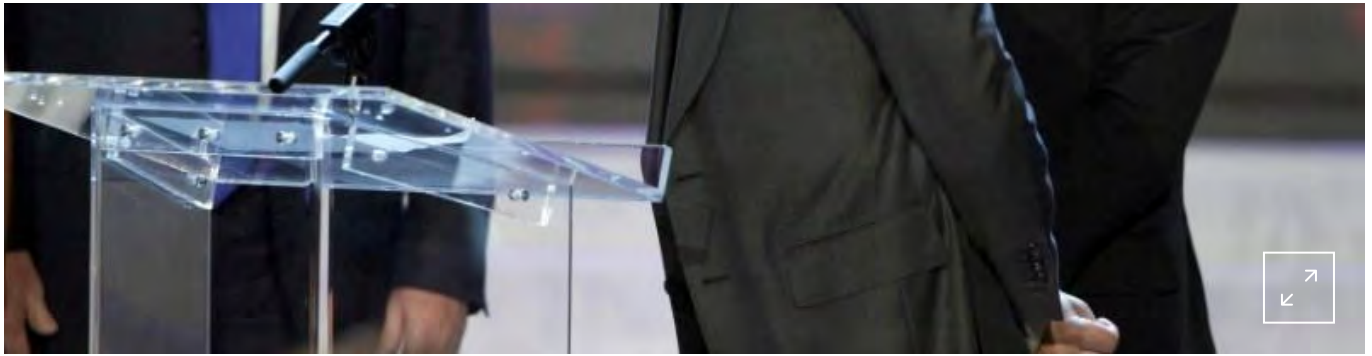
## U.S. lawmakers question businessman at 2016 Trump Tower meeting: sources

Mark Hosenball, Jonathan Landay



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A Georgian-American businessman who met then-Miss Universe pageant owner Donald Trump in 2013, has been questioned by congressional investigators about whether he helped organize a meeting between Russians and Trump's eldest son during the 2016 election campaign, four sources familiar with the matter said.





FILE PHOTO: Russian singer Emin Agalarov (C) speaks as his father Aras Agalarov and Donald Trump (L), co-owner of the Miss Universe Organization, look on during a news conference after the 2013 Miss USA pageant at the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada June 16, 2013. REUTERS/Steve Marcus

The meeting at Trump Tower in New York involving Donald Trump Jr. and other campaign advisers is a focus of probes by Congress and Special Counsel Robert Mueller on whether campaign officials colluded with Russia when it sought to interfere in the U.S. election, the sources said. Russia denies allegations by U.S. intelligence agencies that it meddled in the election and President Donald Trump denies any collusion.

The Senate and House of Representatives intelligence committees recently questioned behind closed doors **Irakly Kaveladze**, a U.S. citizen born in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, the sources said. He is a U.S.-based representative of Azerbaijani oligarch Aras Agalarov's real estate firm, the Crocus Group.

The panels knew Kaveladze was at the June 9, 2016 meeting but became more interested in him after learning he also attended a private dinner in Las Vegas in 2013 with Trump and Agalarov as they celebrated an agreement to hold that year's Miss Universe pageant in Moscow, the sources said.

Committee members now want to know more about the extent of Kaveladze's contacts with the Trump family and whether he had a bigger role than previously believed in setting up the Trump Tower meeting when Trump was a Republican candidate for president.

SPONSORED

The White House declined to comment. Mueller's office also declined to comment.

Scott Balber, a New York lawyer who represents Kaveladze, confirmed that his client attended both the dinner in Las Vegas and the Trump Tower meeting but said he did not set up the second meeting. Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, other Trump campaign aides, and Russian lawyer Natalia Veselnitskaya were also at that meeting.

Lawyer Balber also said the committees were only seeking Kaveladze's input as a witness and were not targeting him for investigation.

"No-one has ever told me that they have any interest in him other than as a witness," Balber said.

Lawyers for Trump Jr. and Kushner did not respond to requests for comment about their contacts with Kaveladze. A lawyer for President Trump declined to comment.

One photograph from the 2013 dinner, when Trump still owned the Miss Universe pageant, shows Agalarov and his pop singer son Emin along with Trump, two Trump aides and several other people at the dining table. Another shows Kaveladze standing behind Trump and Emin Agalarov as they speak.

The pictures were found by a University of California at Irvine student and blogger Scott Stedman, who posted them on Nov. 22. Aras Agalarov is a billionaire property developer in Russia who was awarded the Order of Honor by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Several U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said Mueller's team and the committees are looking for any evidence of a link between the Trump Tower meeting and the release six weeks later of emails stolen from Democratic Party organizations.

They are also trying to determine whether there was any discussion at the New York meeting of lifting U.S. economic sanctions on Russia, a top priority for Putin, the officials said.

Rob Goldstone, a British publicist, told Trump Jr. ahead of the New York meeting that Russian lawyer Veselnitskaya would be bringing damaging information about donations to a charity linked to Trump's Democratic rival Hillary Clinton, according to emails later released by Trump Jr.

Trump Jr. initially said the meeting was about Russian adoptions but later said it also included Veselnitskaya's promises of information on the donations to the Clinton charity. He said he ultimately never received the information, although it was later posted on the Internet.

In a statement issued after meeting with the Senate Judiciary Committee on Sept. 7, Trump, Jr. said Goldstone and Veselnitskaya were in a conference room with him as well as Kaveladze and a translator.

Balber said Kaveladze attended expecting to serve as a translator, although he did not do so in the end because Veselnitskaya brought her own.

Reporting by Mark Hosenball and Jonathan Landay; additional reporting by Polina Nikolskaya in Moscow; editing by Kieran Murray and Grant McCool

*Our Standards:* [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

---

[Apps](#) [Newsletters](#) [Advertise with Us](#) [Advertising Guidelines](#) [Cookies](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Privacy](#)



All quotes delayed a minimum of 15 minutes. See [here](#) for a complete list of exchanges and delays.

© 2018 Reuters. All Rights Reserved.